

REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

The Office Action mailed February 9, 2006, has been received and its contents carefully considered. Reconsideration and withdrawal of the outstanding rejections is respectfully requested in view of the foregoing amendments and the following remarks.

The title of the invention has been amended in keeping with the Examiner's requirement.

The Brief Description of the Drawings has been amended as suggested by the Examiner, and the trademarks have been capitalized as suggested by the Examiner. Accordingly, further comment is not believed necessary.

The objection to claim 9 has been attended to by deleting the reference to DELRIN®.

The rejection of claim 9 as being indefinite has also been addressed by deleting the reference to DELRIN®.

The claims stand rejected as being anticipated by, or rendered obvious by, the U.S. Patent Publication to Carlson et al., taken in combination with Loose, Freed et al., and of Greve et al. in various combinations. Claims 5 and 12 were also rejected as being obvious over Weeks et al. Claims 6 and 18 were also rejected as being obvious over Weeks et al. in view of Thrasher. These rejections are respectfully traversed.

Without conceding the propriety of the rejections, and solely to expedite prosecution of this application, independent claims 1 and 10 have each been amended.

Turning first to claim 1, claim 1 recites that the blade has a curved profile tip, and that the groove has a curved profile complimentary to the curved profile of the tip. An example of this can be seen in the embodiment of Fig. 2 of the present application. Carlson et al. does not teach or suggest a curved cutting blade 30, and appears to show an angled straight edge in Figs. 5A to 5C. Moreover, nothing in Carlson et al. is seen to teach or suggest a groove having a

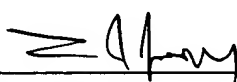
complimentary shape with the tip. To the contrary, the feature identified by the Examiner seems to be substantially wider than the tip illustrated in Carlson et al. For at least this reason, amended claim 1 is believed patentable over Carlson et al. The secondary citations have been reviewed, but are not believed to remedy this deficiency in Carlson et al. Accordingly, claim 1 is believed patentable.

Claim 10 has been amended to recite a drive system that rotates the tip between a first cutting orientation and a second cutting orientation and to recite that the groove is disposed along a path traveled by the tip, wherein in the first cutting orientation the tip remains at a stationary location along the groove, and in the second cutting orientation the tip travels along the groove. Support for this feature can be found at least in Figs. 2 and 3 which show the tip being rotated about its longitudinal axis between two cutting orientations relative to the groove, and for example in paragraph [0024] which discusses the device for rotating the tip in this manner. Paragraph [0030] also describes that orientation of Fig. 2 provides a slitting cut by translating the material being cut, and the orientation of Fig. 3 provides a butt cut where the blade is drawn across the material while the material is held stationary.

These features are believed neither taught nor suggested by Carlson et al. Carlson is not seen to teach or suggest any rotation of its blade 30. To the contrary, Carlson appears to be addressed to single direction cutting only. The other citations have been reviewed, but are not believed to remedy this deficiency in Carlson et al. Accordingly, claim 10 is believed patentable for at least these reasons.

In view of the foregoing, reconsideration and allowance of this application are believed in order, and such action is earnestly solicited. Should the Examiner believe that a telephone conference would be helpful in expediting prosecution of the application; the Examiner is invited to telephone the undersigned at 202-861-1696.

Respectfully submitted,
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